

Minutes of the State Board of Health

April 9, 2003

The Washington State Board of Health (SBOH) met at the Phoenix Inn Hotel at 415 Capitol Way North in Olympia, Washington. SBOH Chair Linda Lake called the public meeting to order at 9:43 a.m. and addressed the attendees with the following statement:

“This is a public meeting of the SBOH held under provision of RCW 43.20. Notice of the meeting was provided in accordance with provisions of RCW 34.05, the Administrative Procedures Act. Those members having any conflict of interest on any item coming before the Board will report that conflict with respect to the particular subject under consideration. In case of challenge of any Board members by the public, the Board shall decide the status of the challenged members to participate before considering the substance of the matter.

Copies of all materials supplied to the Board for today’s meeting have been available since close of business last Friday from the Board’s Olympia office and on the Board’s Web site at www.doh.wa.gov/sboh. They are also available today, along with anything else we have received since, at the table in the back of the room. To conserve public funds, we have only made as many copies as we feel will be needed, so we may run out of some particularly popular items. If you do not find a document you need, please ask Executive Assistant Desiree Robinson, or another Board staff person for one.

Our meeting today is open to the public, so please feel free to listen in on informal discussions involving Board members or staff, including any that may occur during breaks or lunch.”

SBOH members present:

Linda Lake, MBA, Chair
Thomas H. Locke, MD, MPH, Vice Chair
Charles Chu, DPM
Secretary Mary Selecky

Joe Finkbonner, R.Ph., M.H.A.
Ed Gray, MD
The Honorable Carolyn Edmonds

SBOH members absent:

Vickie Ybarra, RN, MPH
Carl Osaki, RS, MSPH
The Honorable David Crump, PhD

State Board of Health Staff present:

Don Sloma, Executive Director
Craig McLaughlin, Senior Health Policy Manager
Doreen Garcia, Senior Health Policy Advisor

Marianne Seifert, Health Policy Advisor
Desiree Robinson, Executive Assistant
Jennifer Dodd, Assistant to the Board

Guests and Other Participants:

Richard Marin, Edmonds City Council
Donna Wright, Marysville City Council
Bill White, Department of Health
James Apa, WA State Public Health Association
Betty Bekemeier, WA State Public Health Association
Donna Borgford-Parnell, WA State Public Health Association

Ted Broussard, Citizen
Karen Brozovich, WA State Public Health Association
Susan Camp, WA State Public Health Association
Lisa Carpenter, Snohomish County Health District
Kathy Carson, WA State Public Health Association
Nori Catabay, King County Board of Health Staff
L. Darrell Cochran, Thurston County Environmental Health
Vic Colman, Department of Health
Richard Conlin, Seattle City Council/King County Board of Health
Kathy Cunningham, IFPTE Local 17
Shelley Curtis, Children's Alliance
Scott Daniels, Kitsap County Health District
Howard Doherty, Jr., Clallam County Commissioner
Elaine Engle, WA State Public Health Association
Brian Fiandini, Seattle University School of Nursing
Kim Field, WA State Public Health Association
Eileen Finnigan, WA State Public Health Association
Tammy Fullin, Association of WA Cities
Miriam Gray, WA State Public Health Association
Maryanne Guichard, Department of Health
Ward Hinds, Snohomish County Health District
Sue Hutchins, WA Association of Local WIC Agencies
Larry Jecha, MD, Benton/Franklin County Health District
Lorena Jeske, WA State Public Health Association
Christina Johnson-Conley, WA State Public Health Association
Vicki Kirkpatrick, WA State Association of Local Public Health Officials
Kay Koontz, Clark County Health Department
Mark Linquist, Wahkiakum County
Allene Mares, WA State Public Health Association
Richard Marin, Snohomish County Board of Health
Judy May, WA State Public Health Association
Sherri McDonald, Thurston County Health Department
Jeff Mero, Association of Public Hospital Districts
Rick Mockler, Snohomish County Health District
Maggie Moran, King County Board of Health
Mich'l Needham, Governor's Office
Khang Ngo, NWCPHP
Bud Nicola, King County Board of Health
Donna Oberg, WA Association of Local WIC Agencies
Larry Pederson, Thurston Community Network
Suzanne Plemmons, Private Citizen
Matthew Pruitt, Seattle-King County Health District
Lyle Quasim, Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health
Karen Ray, Seattle University School of Nursing
Scott Sufficool, City of Seattle
Senator Pat Thibaudeau
Becky Thibadeaux, WA State Public Health Association
Adrienne Thompson, IFPTE Local 17

Kim Marie Thorburn, MD MPH, Spokane Regional Health District
Shawn Ultican, Private Citizen
Michael Underhill, UW School of Public Health & Community Medicine
Roger Valdez, WA State Public Health Association
Karen Valenzuela, WA State Public Health Association
John Wiesman, WA State Public Health Association
Donna Wright, Snohomish County Board of Health
Dianna Yu, MD MSPH, Thurston County Public Health/Lewis County Health Department

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Approve April 9, 2003 agenda

Motion/Second: Locke/Finkbonner

Approved unanimously

ADOPTION OF January 8, 2003 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Approve the March 12, 2002 minutes as written

Motion/Second: Finkbonner/Selecky

Approved unanimously

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH UPDATE

Secretary Mary Selecky presented the Public Health Proclamation from Governor Locke, which includes his declaration that Public Health Week is April 7- April 11, 2002 (see Board Packets).

Senator Pat Thibaudeau spoke to the Board about the current budget situation. She announced that in the Senate budget proposal there are no cuts to date in the public health backfill of \$48 million. In addition the Senate budget includes \$13 million dollars in additional funds for public health. She stated that there would not be new taxes, but many fees. She stated that between 40,000-50,000 kids will no longer have health care and about 48,000 women who are undocumented aliens will no longer have health care coverage – their children will be US citizens and may have higher health care costs because of lack of prenatal care. She talked about severe problems for the Basic Health Plan.

Mr. Rick Mockler, Snohomish County Health Department Administrator, asked if the reserve would be considered as a source of additional funds for local public health. Senator Thibaudeau stated that there does not seem to be enthusiasm for property tax increases and the Senate bill proposing an increase to pay for public health is dead. She also said that she has not had a lot of contact from people concerned about increased funding for public health. SBOH Member Dr. Ed Gray described an instance of a senator voting against health care for the medically indigent, then asking for help to get health care coverage for a medically indigent friend.

GOVERNOR LOCKE'S PRIORITIES OF GOVERNMENT IN HEALTH

Wolfgang Opitz, Deputy Director of the Office of Financial Management (OFM) provided an overview of the Governor's Priorities of Government process. He stated that OFM is proud of the approach taken to the budget but disturbed by the results. He discussed the previous years' process of asking for percentage cuts from major agencies supported by the state general funds. This year, Mr. Opitz said, they wanted to take a longer look at the entire budget, not just the cut list. They adopted an approach that set ten priorities, one of which was health and health care. He said he was most impressed by the work of the health care group, which asked: "What should the role of the state be in the purchase and provision of

health care.” At the very top of the list of health priorities was public health. He noted that OFM faced a \$2.4 billion shortfall, while now the Legislature is facing a shortfall of more than \$3 billion. For more information, see materials behind Tab 4.

SBOH Member Dr. Tom Locke said he was concerned that we have not gone from a discussion of the priorities of government to a discussion of essential responsibilities of government. SBOH Member Carolyn Edmonds said she thought the OFM process was excellent and she was thrilled to see public health ranked so high, which to a great extent this was due to the work of Secretary Selecky. She asked what the plan would be to rebuild government after “the wheels fall off the truck.” Mr. Opitz said there were questions of which wheels you allow to fall off which truck, and the size of replacement trucks and replacement wheels. He noted that nationally there is recognition that the Washington process is ahead of most states. Chair Lake noted that Mr. Opitz had mentioned changing the relationships between state and local government and asked where negotiations about those changes would take place. Mr. Opitz said those discussions will take place anywhere there is a relationship. Secretary Selecky added that in her experience as a cabinet member, the Priorities of Government process required people to come forward with data about outcomes from state-funded programs.

WEST NILE VIRUS UPDATE

Chair Lake introduced the topic of West Nile virus (WNV). She stated that she became aware of this issue at the Joint Conference on Health last fall. SBOH Policy Analyst Marianne Seifert mentioned that the discussion today about WNV fits well with earlier discussion, since it is an example of public health activities without specific funding in a system increasingly relying on “fees for service.” She referred to materials behind Tab 3, including laws regarding mosquito control and abatement, and introduced Bill White, Assistant Secretary, DOH Environmental Health Programs. Mr. White stated that we do not have a WNV problem in the state at this time. He encouraged the Board and the individual Board members to take leadership roles in their communities, and to stress the immediate need for mosquito surveillance at the local level. He also asked members to consider the need for resources, the need to communicate information to the public, and the need for public education.

Chair Lake asked about responsibilities among the different agencies, and how state or local health departments or districts would respond to someone asking if the health department would take care of their neighbor’s mosquitoes. Mr. White replied that the caller would probably get a different answer depending on who they called, but that he hoped health department staff would send someone out to educate the neighbor about reducing standing water where mosquitoes breed. Dr. Gray asked what options individuals have for mosquito control on their own property. For example, are they allowed to spray their own property? He asked whether people could get this information in a pamphlet. Mr. White responded that all the information cannot be included in a pamphlet but the details are on the DOH Web site, and added that pesticide use should be a last resort since it can result in ever-increasing reliance on pesticides. He recommended Integrated Pest Management practices. Mr. White distributed WNV pamphlets to Board members. Dr. Locke said the 10 Essential Services framework was useful in describing the range of public health responses to WNV. He advised being honest about the lack of resources, and letting people know that if you want a system able to respond you have to invest in it.

PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING REQUIREMENTS & PHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

Secretary of Health Mary Selecky presented an historical overview of public health funding. She stated that it has actually been underfunding. She discussed the importance of the Public Health Improvement Plan (PHIP) and the findings and recommendations of the PHIP Finance Committee. (See materials behind Tab 5). Secretary Selecky explained that financing at the local level is as complicated as it is at the

federal and state levels. She reviewed how over the past decade basic funding for public health has eroded while need has increased with emerging public health problems such as SARS and WNV. Secretary Selecky said that Washington has a model and needs to continue to push this model forward. She distributed the DOH 2003-05 Budget Comparison, which compared the budgets proposed by the Governor, the Senate, and the House.

MAJOR LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

Vickie Kirkpatrick, Director of the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO), began her presentation by referring to Tab 6 for a Board memo explaining major public health funding proposals. She stated that there is universal agreement that public health is an essential piece of local government and the question now is how to fund it adequately.

Chair Lake asked Ms. Kirkpatrick what she thought of Senator Thibaudeau's comment that she is not hearing about the need for public health funding. Ms. Kirkpatrick stated that public health is often not heard about when public health is going well. But when there is a crisis everyone hears about it. Ms. Edwards stated that people do not complain to officials about public health because it does not have a direct effect on people, and that it only has a direct effect when we are not doing our job.

LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH PERSPECTIVES ON PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

Howard Doherty, Jr., Clallam County Commissioner, spoke about the stress on county budgets. He said he always asks health department staff to do more with less, and they typically agree, but in the long run that is untenable. He talked about some of the issues facing his county, such as meth lab cleanup and a need to have a pool of emergency funds to respond to emergency health issues. He emphasized the need for education to support prevention efforts and to inform the public about the cost-effectiveness of prevention programs.

Ms. Edmonds, member of the King County Council and chair of the King County Board of Health, introduced two other King County Board of Health members, Richard Conlin, Seattle City Council Member and Dr. Bud Nicola.

Mr. Conlin said we are dismantling a public health system it took us 100 years to build. He noted that the life expectancy in the former Soviet Union has decreased markedly as surviving countries in that region have abandoned their public health system. King County concerns, he said, reflect the international situation and the need to respond to bioterrorism and possible weapons of mass destruction, emerging disease problems including SARS and WNV, the outbreak of TB, the likelihood eventually of influenza pandemic, and the day-to-day challenges of delivering services to an increasingly diverse population. Those challenges include mold in schools, the growing prevalence of obesity, and more. Per capita spending on public health in King County is expected to drop 20 to 30 percent.

Dr. Nicola said environmental health programs for King County are largely fee supported, which means there is very little capacity to respond to new issues. He said he wanted to add his voice to the call for stable and secure public health funding.

Ms. Edmonds talked about the similarities and differences between public health in King County and smaller health jurisdictions. All counties have unique problems, she said. In King County, the unique problems have to do with size, complexity, and the immigrant population. Ms. Edmonds added that the

good news is that public awareness of the importance of public health is at an all-time high, and that the time is right to develop a new funding system for public health.

Lyle Quasim, Member of the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health and Chief of Staff for the Pierce County Executive, stated that the city of Tacoma puts money directly into the Health Department. Today Mr. Quasim attended a cabinet meeting and the topics were bioterrorism, WNV, SARS and meth labs. Mr. Quasim stated that it is vital that constituents know they have adequate public health protection. He said it is important to push for support of public health funding. Mr. Quasim supports the way that the Governor has stood behind public health and he also supports Senator Franklin's bill that would tax candy. He is concerned that if the tax proposal does go on the ballot, it needs to pass. He added that it wouldn't take affect until the following year. He stated that the price of public awareness is public expectation, and that unmet expectations have consequences in government and for everyone in the state.

Richard Marin, Edmonds City Council Member, made the following points: (1) no one has not benefited from public health; (2) funding per capita in Snohomish County has gone down by 24 percent in the last six years, and (3) lost funding needs to be replaced in the future.

Donna Wright, Marysville City Council Member, provided an example of a child dying unexpectedly from a blood disease and how the health department responded immediately to identify the cause. She praised the local health department and stressed the importance of stable secure funding for public health.

Board Executive Director Sloma referred Board members to Tab 9 for letters of support, and mentioned one from Island County Board of Health.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Adrienne Thompson, representative of the International Federation of Technical Engineers (Local 17). Local 17's members work in local health departments, local health districts, and DOH. She asked the Board to continue to support funding for public health. She is also asking the Legislature for a dedicated, stable funding source for public health.

Cathy Carson, representative from the Washington State Public Health Association (WSPHA). Ms. Carson stated that while responding to emerging diseases is vital, other public health responsibilities must not be forgotten. Prevention activities go on in the community every day, and public health officials are often agents of surveillance.

John Weisman, President of the WSPHA. Mr. Weisman stated that the public health system must be able to continually respond—emergencies like a TB outbreak do not wait. He stated that stable funding for public health is essential. Funding for public health has been reduced continually and it is not affordable to let this happen. While on vacation many public health officials have beepers, phones, and pagers on 24/7/365 to respond if there is a public health emergency.

Dr. Kim Thornburn, Health Officer for Spokane County Regional Health District. She spoke to the needs of smaller and rural counties. As an example, she told a story about AIDSNet's regions in Eastern Washington and discussions about high-risk behaviors occurring in rural communities. HIV funding follows infection, although this doesn't make sense because we are trying to prevent infection, she said. Funding should follow behaviors not just infection.

Dr. Diana Yu, Thurston County Health Officer. Dr. Yu stated that public health workers are very dedicated, which is why Senator Thibaudeau has not heard from them. Since they are so dedicated, public health officials continue working hard despite funding shortfalls. Speaking for Thurston County, reserves have been used up to avoid staffing cuts, because experienced staffs are critical to maintaining infrastructure. Without relief, Thurston County will be \$900,000 in the hole. Public health is not a luxury—it is a necessity, she said. County officials are trapped because they need to make choices between police, fire, and public health departments. Dr. Yu is also the Health Officer for Lewis County, which is a rural county with very limited resources. They have recently had rabies cases, an outbreak in a nursing home, and hantavirus deaths. She believes that public health funding should be population-based not only fee-based.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairs Lake adjourned the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Linda Lake, Chair